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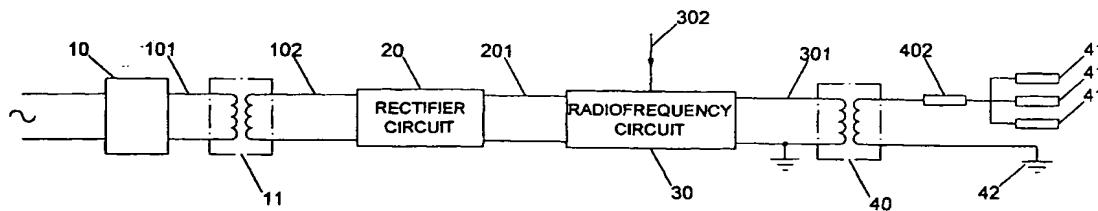
For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

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(54) Title: COSMETIC METHOD OF TREATING SKIN AGEING



(57) Abstract: A device for carrying out a cosmetic method or treating skin ageing and the method comprising the following steps: a) connecting an electronic device, able to generate high frequency electric current waves having a distorted sinusoidal wave form by the presence of harmonics, to one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape; b) applying said one or more electrodes on the skin surface in the area to be treated; c) activating said electronic device in order to transfer said current waves to said one or more electrodes and to maintain said device activated for a predetermined time; d) deactivating said device and removing the electrodes from the contact with the treated area.

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COSMETIC METHOD OF TREATING SKIN AGEING

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention is about a cosmetic method of treating skin ageing and the device carrying out said method.

[0002] As from the ancient times, the cosmetic art was interested in treating somehow the ageing effects, especially on the skin, in order to reduce as far as possible the unpleasant aesthetical effects that the ageing causes in the aspect of the persons with the appearance of wrinkles and the skin and muscular tissues relaxation.

[0003] Even if some means for fighting against the skin ageing are changed during the centuries, it can be essentially stated that the main treatments still used today are related to the skin treatment by the application of creams on the skin combined with a massage, in order to make the absorption easier.

[0004] The cosmetic creams have active principles, sometimes natural and sometimes obtained with chemical synthesis, which mainly act on the superficial layer of the skin in order to limit or to eliminate the wrinkledness acquired by the skin with the passing of time.

[0005] Generally, a cosmetic with skin recovery functionality acts on the hydration of the either deep or superficial layers of the skin, reducing as far as possible the loss of water of the cells and thus restoring the turgidity of the skin.

[0006] Another action exerted by the actual cosmetic products is to reduce the thickness of the more external layer (horny layer) of the skin, restoring it a certain elasticity.

[0007] There are also cosmetic treatment directed to reduce the excess of free radicals which, if present in the skin, begin to destroy the membranes of the more superficial cells of the skin, which are the main defence against the external environment.

[0008] Cosmetic and medical treatment are used to reduce the effect of free

radicals, also in function of the effects they have on the more external tissues, that is the skin.

[0009] One of the limits of the aforesaid cosmetic treatments is the fact that such treatment substantially involves the superficial layer of the skin, and it does not eliminate the causes of the ageing.

[0010] Consequently, said treatments have to be repeated with time and they are not suitable to gain stable results.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] It is the main object of the invention to provide for a cosmetic method of treating skin ageing which gives stable results with time and which is without unwelcome effects.

[0012] It is another object of the invention to provide for a cosmetic method which allows to eliminate in a substantially definitive way the ageing effects, like both the formation of wrinkles on the skin and the relaxation of the skin and its support tissues.

[0013] It is a further object of the invention to provide for a cosmetic method which is easy to use and without any collateral and unwelcome effect on the organism on which the treatment is applied.

[0014] Not the least object is the possibility to perform a treatment by a device which is efficient and little expensive.

[0015] The above mentioned objects, and other which will be better highlighted in the following description, are attained by a cosmetic method of treating skin ageing wherein it comprises the following steps:

[0016] a) connecting an electronic device able to generate high frequency electric current waves, having a distorted sinusoidal wave form by the presence of harmonics, to one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape;

[0017] b) applying said one or more electrodes on the skin surface in the area to

be treated;

[0018] c) activating said electronic device in order to transfer said current waves to said one or more electrodes and to maintain said device activated for a predetermined time;

[0019] d) deactivating said device and removing the electrodes from the contact with the treated area.

[0020] It is also a part of the present invention the device carrying out the aforesaid method and essentially comprising one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape, to be applied on the skin by adherence and connected to an electronic device, said electronic device comprising:

- [0021] a rectifier circuit fed by power grid voltage which supplies a direct voltage, preferably stabilized, to a radiofrequency circuit;

- [0022] a radiofrequency circuit comprising at least an electronic switch fed by said voltage and piloted by a piloting circuit,

[0023] wherein said radiofrequency circuit output consists of a current wave of distorted sinusoidal form by the presence of harmonics of at least the second and third order, said current wave circulating in a broadband resonant circuit on the frequency of the pure wave of said distorted sinusoidal form.

[0024] Advantageously, according to the method of the invention one or more essentially laminar electrodes are applied on the parts of the skin areas which have to be treated against the ageing, in order to follow without difficulties the shape of the skin surface.

[0025] In a preferred executive embodiment of the invention, the electrodes are also provided with an adhesive substance which helps the maintenance of the contact on the skin during the application of the wave form generated by the electronic device.

[0026] The electronic device carrying out the method of the invention is a device in which the resultant wave applied to the electrodes is a wave preferably having a

main frequency of 4MHz and having harmonics of second, third and fourth order.

[0027] The effect of the application of such wave forms directly on the skin is to operate in the muscular layers placed beneath the epidermis, which is the outermost tissue of the skin, so that the cellular regeneration action is stimulated.

[0028] From performed tests it was noticed that the cellular regeneration is also matched with the permeability recovery of the cell wall, which has become impermeable with the ageing and has included therein fats and harmful substances for the same cell's life.

[0029] The regeneration possibility of the muscle beneath the skin, and thus the muscular tone recovery, allows a stable increase of said muscle volume and therefore the consequent stretching of the overlying skin, so that the wrinkledness and relaxation effects, typical of the ageing of the skin and its muscle below, disappear.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0030] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will be better highlighted in a particular executive embodiment of the invention, given in an explanatory but not limiting way, with reference to the figures of the annexed drawings, wherein:

- [0031] FIG. 1 shows a flow chart of the electronic device of the invention;
- [0032] FIG. 2 shows in detail the radiofrequency circuit belonging to the electronic device of FIG. 1; and
- [0033] FIG. 3 shows the wave form, with reference to the different frequencies, of the available power at the electrodes of the electronic device of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] With reference to the aforesaid figures, in particular to FIG. 1, it is noted that the circuit carrying out the electronic device is fed by power grid voltage, and it is provided with an input filter **10** for the protection against possible radiofrequency

interferences, present in the power grid or capable to be transferred from the power grid to the electronic device.

[0035] The circuit is then provided with a transformer, indicated with numeral **11**, in which a voltage **101**, for instance of 230V, enters and a reduced voltage **102**, of about 140 or 160V, exits. Said voltage enters the rectifier circuit **20**, which is a common double half-wave diode rectifier circuit in the example, transforming the alternate current into pulsing rectified current, then filtered in order to have a rather high direct voltage **201** as output, for instance of 220V, which is the radiofrequency circuit **30** supply.

[0036] According to an executive embodiment of the invention, instead of the transformer **11** and the rectifier with filter **20**, a stabilized switching AC/DC converter can be used, or a transformer coupled with a rectifier with filter having a stabilized switching DC/DC converter in output.

[0037] These known solutions for the technician expert in the related field are not shown.

[0038] In any case, the voltage **201** outgoing from these rectifiers should be direct and rectified, with a prefixed value preferably comprised for instance between 50V and 200V, where the chosen voltage value depends on the utilization of the device.

[0039] Said radiofrequency circuit is better evidenced in FIG. 2.

[0040] In the embodiment of the example, it provides for the utilization of two MOSFET electronic switches. Each MOSFET **305** is piloted by a piloting circuit **306**, which is fed by the voltage **302** supplied by a direct-voltage rectified feeder of known type (not shown), in which it is possible to adjust the output voltage, which can be also of switching type; to obtain a better efficiency.

[0041] The piloting circuit **306** is also adjusted by a current controller **310**, which also includes a microprocessor **314**.

[0042] More exactly, the radiofrequency circuit **30** provides for each MOSFET **305** working as a switch, cutting off the direct current coming from the output **201** of the

rectifier circuit **20** and applied to each MOSFET collector.

[0043] Each piloting circuit **306** emits an unidirectional square wave **304** of pulsing and non alternating type, which controls the base of each MOSFET.

[0044] The piloting circuit **306** frequency is maintained constant by a quartz oscillator **311**, having an oscillation frequency of 4 MHz, connected to a BUFFER **313**.

[0045] The basic oscillation frequency of 4 MHz, and the higher frequencies too, can be also obtained by a circuit or a specific electronic device, like for instance a frequency synthesizer.

[0046] The MOSFET **305** piloting is performed by a signal having oscillation frequency equal to the quartz one, or to a circuit with similar functions frequency, which is of 4 MHz in the example's embodiment.

[0047] When the MOSFET **305** is switched off, it cuts off the current in the branch **301** while, when it is switched on, it allows the current passage in said branch **301**.

[0048] The wave form amplitude of the current in the branch **301** depends on the control of the signal **302** connected to the piloting circuit **306**.

[0049] The signal **302** control is performed by a potentiometer **303**, or for example by a regulator of touch screen type, and it allows to choose the output wave amplitude in order to obtain the power to be supplied to the electrode **41** of the electronic device, according to the interventions to be performed.

[0050] To obtain a power adjustment method which is different from the one described in the example, providing for the power adjustment by the variation of the feeding voltage **302** of the drivers piloting the power MOSFETS gates, a still direct and rectified (by AC/DC converter or by DC/DC converter), but variable for instance from 0V to 200V, voltage **201** can be used, while the voltage **302** is maintained steady.

[0051] Another possibility is that of using the direct and rectified voltage **201**, variable for instance from 0V to 200V, and the variable voltage **302** too to obtain in

this case a power adjustment of mixed type.

[0052] The output signal of the radiofrequency circuit is thus an impulsive current wave **301** at the frequency of 4 MHz, with amplitude adjusted by the power controller **303** which modifies the voltage **302**.

[0053] Since the radiofrequency circuit **30** output is connected to the radiofrequency transformer **40** primary, a circulating current **301** is established, which passes through a resonant circuit at the frequency of 4 MHz, where the capacity and the inductance of the resonant circuit are respectively given by the MOSFETS **305** parasitic capacity, by the condenser **307**, having negligible reactance but with the function of blocking the direct component of the voltage **201**, and by the inductance of the transformer **40** primary circuit.

[0054] According to the invention, the resonant circuit is of wide pass-band type, in order to allow the passage, even if attenuated, of at least the second and the third harmonics of the carrier wave related to the signal **301**.

[0055] Preferably, it has to be obtained that the signal **301** has at least the second, the third and the fourth harmonics.

[0056] To obtain a resonant circuit of wide pass-band type, a high frequency transformer was used in the example of FIG. 2, having a number of turns at the secondary circuit which is equal or greater than the number of turns at the primary circuit.

[0057] In this way, the dosage in decreasing and particular way of the harmonics greater than 4 MHz is obtained, also as a consequence of the kind of intervention to be performed on the skin and/or on the muscle beneath, intervention which changes depending on the different body parts to be treated.

[0058] As it is known, for a resonant circuit the resonance factor Q is given by the formula:

$$Q = \omega C_R R_E = 2\pi f C_R R_E =$$

where f is the frequency of resonance, C_R is the capacity of the resonant circuit, R_E is the equivalent Resistance of the primary circuit when the load, consisting for example in a patient's body to be incised with the electronic scalpel, is applied to

the secondary circuit.

[0059] Since the equivalent Resistance can be expressed with the formula:

$$R_E = R_C \left(\frac{N_2}{N_1} \right)$$

where R_C is the load Resistance and N_1 and N_2 are the numbers of turns of the primary and the secondary respectively, it can be easily understood that the resonance factor Q can be expressed with the formula:

$$Q = 2\pi f C_R R_C \left(\frac{N_2}{N_1} \right)$$

[0060] This formula shows that the resonance factor decreases with the increase of the number of secondary turns with respect to the number of primary ones.

[0061] The resonance factor can also be expressed with the formula:

$$Q = F_R / B$$

where F_R is the frequency of resonance and B is the pass-band.

[0062] In the example of the invention, in order to widen the pass-band of 4 MHz to 8 MHz, 12 MHz and 16 MHz, a transformer with a proper number of turns can be inserted in the resonant circuit, so that the resonance factor is lower than 1, preferably comprised by 0,6 and 0,7.

[0063] With these features of resonant circuit wide pass-band, the transformer secondary current signal in 401 takes the form shown in FIG. 3.

[0064] Observing the wave form of FIG. 3, it can be noted that at 4, 8, 12 and 16 MHz there are power peaks which are the interesting ones and which are transferred to the scalpel manipulator with the above described effects.

[0065] It is noted that the current of the signal 401, once set the power controller 303, is controlled by a current controller belonging to a current sensor 308 placed after the MOSFET 305.

[0066] The voltage signal 309, coming from the current sensor 308, controls the current controller 310 which provides for limiting the current 401, by means of fast comparators controlled by the microprocessor 314, acting with the signal 312 on the BUFFER 313 and thus on the MOSFET piloting circuit, or on the supply 201.

[0067] The current controller **310** can be a circuit or a specific electronic device, or the same microprocessor **314**, which controls the entire system.

[0068] The current control can be also performed by the microprocessor **314**, which controls the entire system, without employing fast comparators.

[0069] In case of low impedance, since the current would reach very high values, a current limiter is present in the circuit, consisting in the inductance **402** which limits the current at the electrodes **41** and avoid the circuit to exceed the maximum admissible value of the current.

[0070] The electric circuit is closed by the ohmic load of the person in cosmetic treatment, thus between the electrodes **41**, the ohmic load of the person and the ground **42**.

[0071] The upper diagram **3a** of FIG. 3 shows the wave form of the available power at the electrodes **41**, while the lower diagram **3b** shows the spectrum of the basic frequency at 4 MHz and the different harmonics at 8, 12 and 16 MHz.

[0072] Advantageously, the electrodes **41** have the form of flexible and thin layers, each of them consisting for example in an aluminium or copper layer.

[0073] Said electrodes are provided with means for the skin adhesion in order to allow the stable contact between the electrode and the skin during the treatment and the subsequent easy removal.

[0074] The surface of each electrode preferably but not necessarily ranges from 5 to 15 cm².

[0075] According to the cosmetic method of treating skin and muscles ageing of the invention, said one or more electrodes **41** are applied on the skin of the area to be treated by adhesive means.

[0076] The adhesive means can be a bonding agent easy to remove from the electrode and especially from the skin, or a suction cup or equivalent means, like pads fixed both on the skin and the electrodes.

[0077] Once the operation of electrodes application is finished, and there is a safe and continuous contact between said electrodes and the skin to be treated, the electronic device of the invention is activated so that the waves generated by said device reach the skin surface for a time interval considered optimal in most of the cases when ranging between 0,5 and 5 minutes. However, it is not excluded that other applications could request longer time intervals.

[0078] During said treatment stage, the power employed and dissipated by the electrodes does not exceed the total of 40-50 Watts dissipated by wide surface electrodes.

[0079] It has been noted that, for a good cosmetic treatment, the supplied power in relation to the surface of the electrodes applied on the skin should not be preferably greater than 0,5 W/cm².

[0080] Performed tests have evidenced that, with such a treatment repeated from 5 to 7 times with the same above described conditions, a considerable reduction of the superficial wrinkles and an increase of the muscular tonicity are obtained, because a regeneration of the tissue beneath the epidermis is obtained, also as a consequence of the recovered membrane permeability.

[0081] Said tissue, being regenerated, recovers its youthful turgidity and thus the overlying skin is stretched again with the effects of considerable wrinkles reduction and cutaneous relaxation.

CLAIMS

1. A cosmetic method of treating skin ageing, **wherein** it comprises the following steps:

- a) connecting an electronic device, able to generate high frequency electric current waves having a distorted sinusoidal wave form by the presence of harmonics, to one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape;
- b) applying said one or more electrodes on the skin surface in the area to be treated;
- c) activating said electronic device in order to transfer said current waves to said one or more electrodes and to maintain said device activated for a predetermined time;
- d) deactivating said device and removing the electrodes from the contact with the treated area.

2. The method according to claim 1 **wherein** said sinusoidal wave is distorted by the presence of harmonics from at least the first to the third order.

3. The method according to claim 1 or 2 **wherein** said distorted sinusoidal wave form applied to one or more electrodes has a frequency greater than 2 MHz.

4. The method according to claim 1 **wherein** the distorted sinusoidal wave applied to one or more electrodes has a frequency of about 4 MHz.

5. The method according to claim 1 **wherein** the maximum power transmitted to said one or more electrodes is in the range of 40-50 Watts.

6. The method according to claim 1 **wherein** the ratio between the supplied power to said one or more electrodes and the surface of said electrodes is not greater than 0,5 W/cm².

7. The method according to any of the preceding claims, **wherein** said electronic device remains active for a time interval comprised between 0,5 and 5 minutes.

8. A device carrying out the cosmetic method of claim 1 **wherein** it comprises:

- one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape, to be applied on the skin by adherence and connected to an electronic device, said device comprising:
- a rectifier circuit fed by power grid voltage which supplies a voltage, to a radiofrequency circuit;
- a radiofrequency circuit comprising at least an electronic switch fed by said voltage and piloted by a piloting circuit, **wherein** said radiofrequency circuit

output consists of a current wave of distorted sinusoidal form by the presence of harmonics of at least the second and third order, said resultant wave circulating in a broadband resonant circuit on the frequency of the pure wave of said distorted sinusoidal form.

9. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** said resonant circuit comprises at least the parasitic capacity of said electronic switch and the inductance of the radiofrequency transformer primary circuit which feeds said one or more electrodes.

10. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** said piloting circuit is connected to a controller circuit comprising a microprocessor which interrupts at prefixed intervals the feeding of said piloting circuit, so that the resultant wave which goes through the resonant circuit takes the form of a intermittent pulses train, each of them consisting in an amplitude modulated wave.

11. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** the wave form amplitude at the electrode is variable by means of a regulator which modifies the voltage of the piloting circuit.

12. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** the wave form amplitude at the electrode is variable by the modification of the rectified direct voltage which feeds said radiofrequency circuit, being maintained constant the voltage feeding the piloting circuit of said at least an electronic switch.

13. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** the wave form amplitude at the electrode is variable by the modification of the rectified direct voltage which feeds said radiofrequency circuit and by means of a regulator which modifies the voltage of the piloting circuit.

14. The device according to claim 8 **wherein** said one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape comprise an adhesive surface able to be easily applied and removed from the skin.

ABSTRACT

A device for carrying out a cosmetic method of treating skin ageing and the method comprising the following steps:

- a) connecting an electronic device, able to generate high frequency electric current waves having a distorted sinusoidal wave form by the presence of harmonics, to one or more electrodes of essentially laminar shape;
- b) applying said one or more electrodes on the skin surface in the area to be treated;
- c) activating said electronic device in order to transfer said current waves to said one or more electrodes and to maintain said device activated for a predetermined time;
- d) deactivating said device and removing the electrodes from the contact with the treated area.

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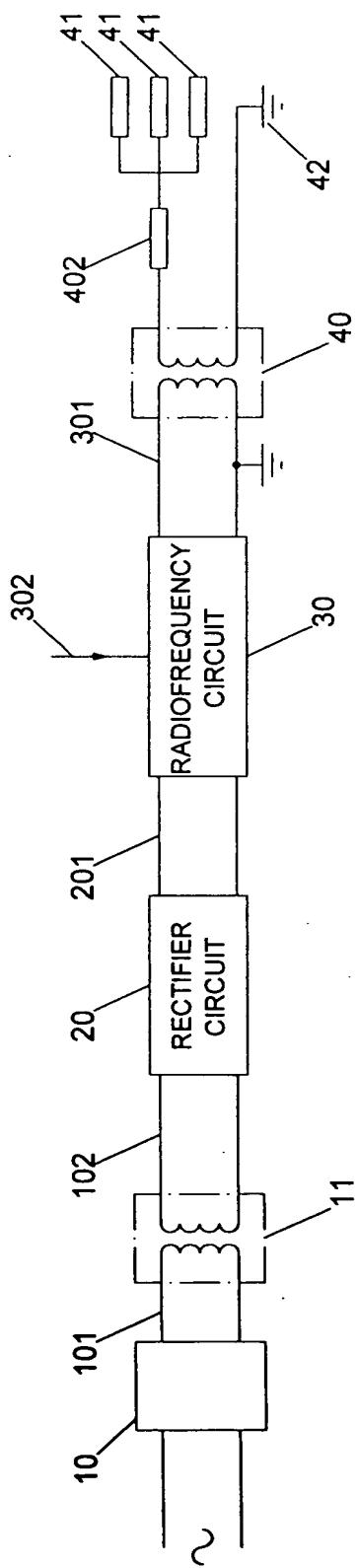


FIG.1

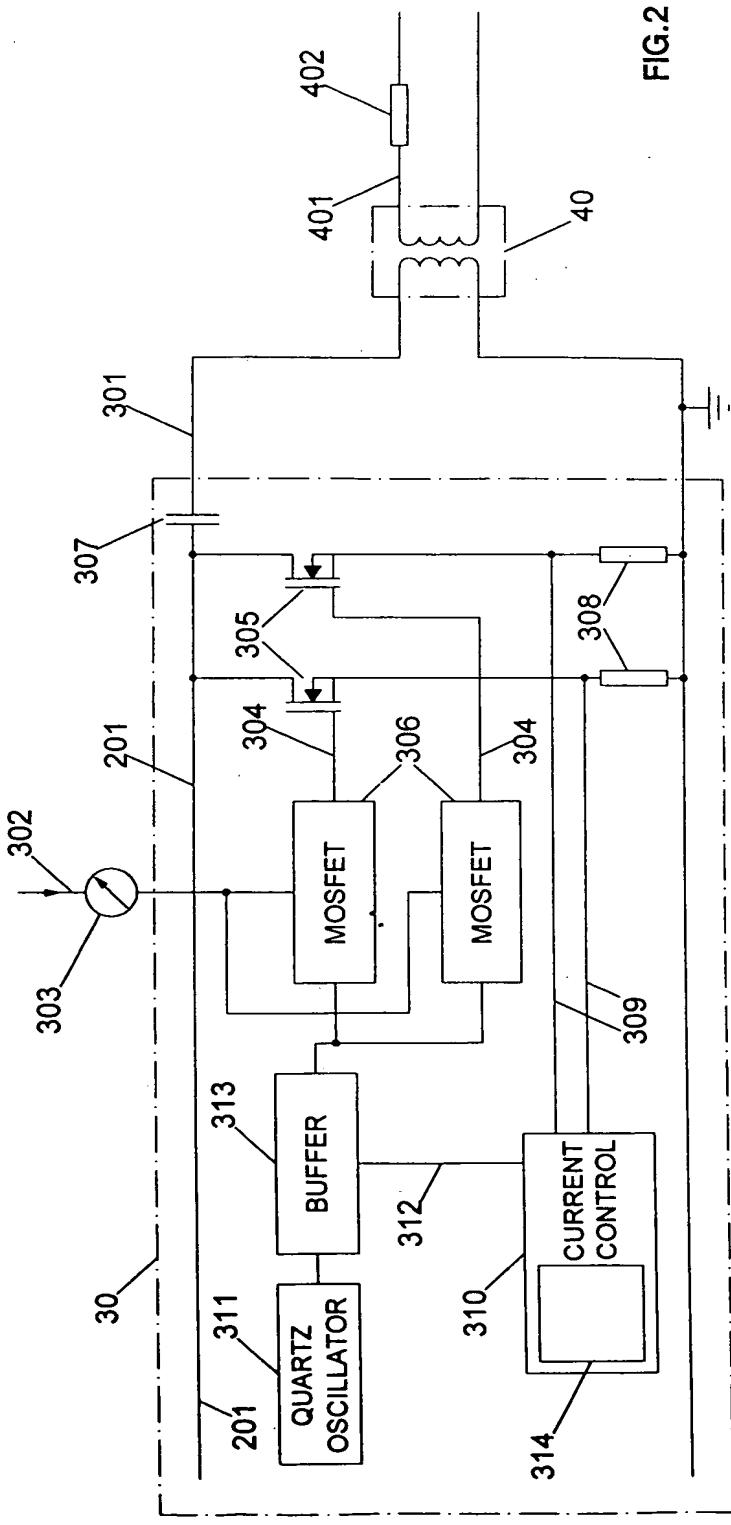
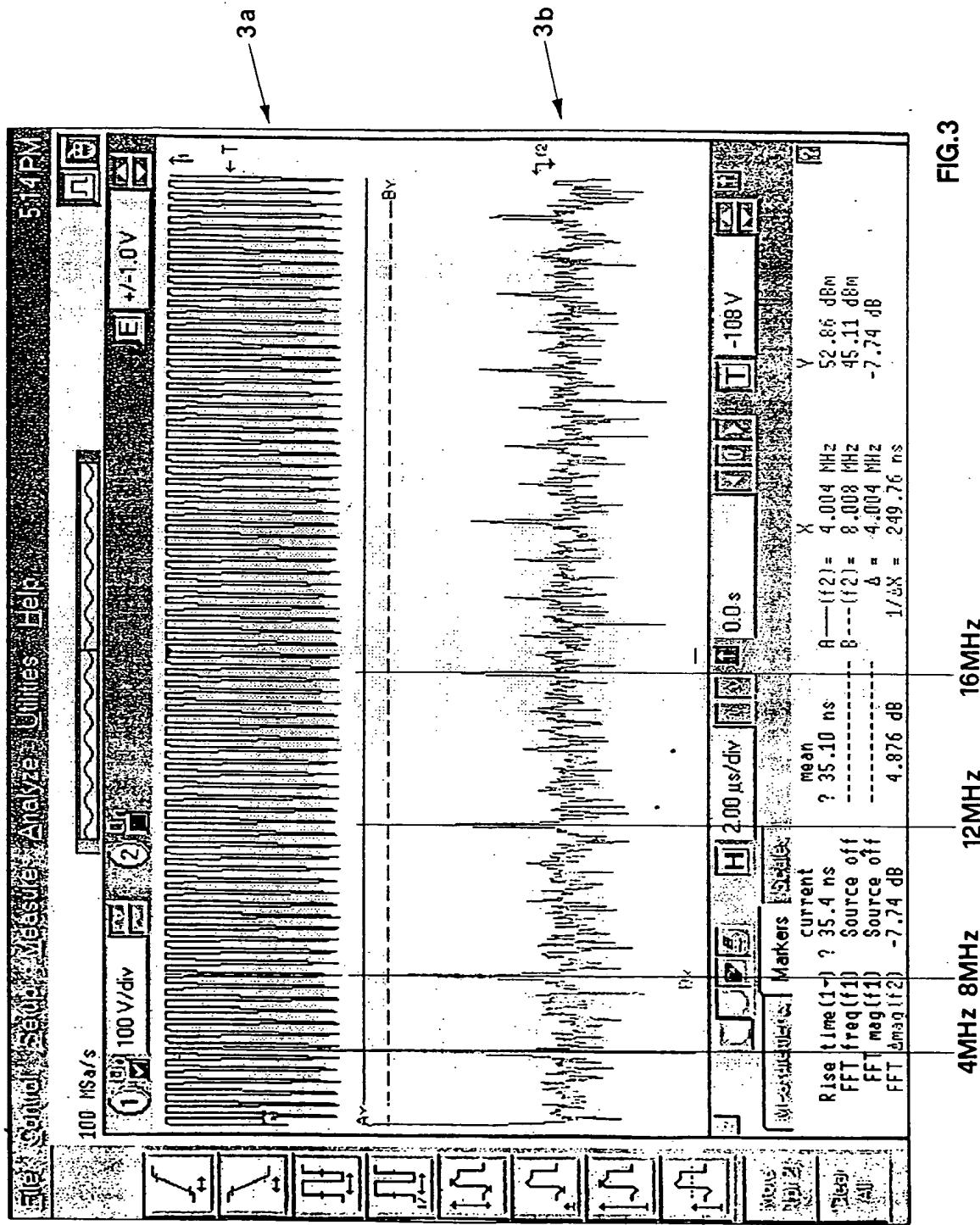


FIG.2

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 A61N1/32

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 A61N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	FR 2 394 301 A (DEKANAT FAKULTY VSEOB LEKA) 12 January 1979 (1979-01-12) figure 1 page 3, line 7 - line 16 ---	8-14
A	US 6 142 927 A (CLARK JAMES HOYT) 7 November 2000 (2000-11-07) abstract column 10, line 33 - line 59 ---	8
A	FR 2 753 385 A (DONIN DE ROSIERE CATHERINE ALI) 20 March 1998 (1998-03-20) abstract; figures 6,7 page 6, line 15 -page 7, line 3 -----	8-14

 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

& document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

31 August 2004

Date of mailing of the international search report

08/09/2004

Name and mailing address of the ISA

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Beck, E

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/IT2004/000189

Box II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: 1-7 because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
Rule 39.1(iv) PCT – Method for treatment of the human or animal body by therapy
2. Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/IT2004/000189

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